

INSPECTION REPORT

GISLINGHAM VC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Gislingham, Suffolk

LEA area: Suffolk

Unique reference number: 124753

Headteacher: Mrs Kim Kelway

Reporting inspector: Mrs. Marianne Harris
23288

Dates of inspection: 2nd – 4th December 2002

Inspection number: 248628

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr. Barry Wood
Date of previous inspection:	12 th – 13 th July 2000

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subjects	Aspect responsibilities
Marianne Harris. 23288	Registered inspector	English Art Religious Education Geography Foundation Stage	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further? How good are curricular and other opportunities? Assessment
Jane O'Keefe 19798	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents? Pupils' personal development
John Linstead 20948	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and Communication Technology Music Physical Education Special educational needs Educational inclusion	How well is the school led and managed?
George Crowther 18814	Team inspector	Science History Design Technology	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Gislingham is a very small voluntary controlled primary school with 68 pupils on roll, ranging in age from four to eleven years old. The school is in a rural part of Suffolk and the majority of pupils come from the village. The school is organised into three classes, with the headteacher teaching groups of pupils for half of the school day. There is a small proportion of pupils who have special educational needs, one of whom has a statement. The nature of these needs vary, but the majority are for learning difficulties. There are no pupils learning English as an additional language. Few pupils are eligible for free school meals and the social circumstances of most families are favourable. When they come into school the children have skills and knowledge that are broadly average, although this differs from year to year. The school has recently moved into a new building and some external work is still being carried out, although this does not affect the day to day running of the school.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Gislingham is a good and effective school that is continuing to improve. The headteacher leads and manages the school very well and is supported by the governing body, who do a good job. Teaching is good in all classes. Standards have improved recently and are now well above average in English, and above average in mathematics. Pupils' achievements are good overall. The new building is having a significant, positive, impact on the work of the school. The capacity to improve further is good. Overall the school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards in English are well above average, and above average in mathematics.
- Teaching is good in all classes.
- There is very good provision for pupils' personal development and this results in very good relationships and very enthusiastic pupils.
- The headteacher leads and manages the school very well.
- The staff take very good care of the pupils.
- The school provides many rich and varied learning opportunities.

What could be improved

- Pupils' skills in carrying out scientific investigations are not good enough.
- Standards in history are too low.
- The role of the co-ordinators, as their work load is too heavy, and weaknesses in some subjects are not identified.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in July 2000. In the two years since that inspection improvement has been very good. Many of the weaknesses identified are now strengths of the school. Standards in English and mathematics are higher and the teaching is good in all classes. There has been significant improvement in the standards attained by pupils in information and communication technology. Assessment in the school is now good and is used very well to plan what the pupils will learn. The role of the co-ordinators still remains an issue for the school to resolve.

STANDARDS

The table shows the results attained at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in national tests.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	All schools			Similar schools	
	2000	2001	2002	2002	
English	D	A	A	A	well above average A above average B
Mathematics	A	C	B	B	average C below average D
Science	E	D	C	C	well below average E

All of the pupils, in Year 6, who took the tests last year, achieved the nationally expected standard in all three subjects, and a significant number attained higher standards in English and mathematics. This represents good achievement for the pupils, and the ambitious targets, detailing how many pupils will achieve the nationally expected levels, set by the school were exceeded. Standards of work seen during the inspection were well above average in English and above average in mathematics. In science they were average, because pupils, by Year 6, are not always able to use their scientific knowledge to plan investigations.

Test results for pupils in Year 2 were similarly high. In reading and writing pupils attained standards that were well above average when compared to schools nationally. Test results in mathematics were average. Teacher assessments in science show the pupils attained average standards. These standards were reflected in the work seen during the inspection, and, overall, represents good achievement for these pupils.

When they enter school children in the reception class have knowledge and skills that would normally be expected. They make good progress during the reception year and most of the children will achieve the *Early Learning Goals*, (standards expected by the time children start in Year 1), by the time they enter Year 1, and many will exceed them. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress throughout the school.

Where judgements could be made in subjects other than English, mathematics and science, pupils in Years 2 and 6 attain standards that are in line with those expected nationally, except in history, where standards are too low because pupils are not able to use a variety of sources to investigate historical events.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are very enthusiastic and proud of their school. In lessons they are keen to join in and, as a result, get a lot done.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils behave well in lessons, in the playground and around school. There have been no exclusions during the past year.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils are mature, confident and show respect for each other. Relationships throughout the school are very good. Pupils get on well together, are considerate and polite, and help each other in lessons.
Attendance	Attendance is very good, and within the top 10% in the country. Pupils are

	rarely late for school, and there is very little unauthorised absence.
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TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	good	good	good

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. ‘Satisfactory’ means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

Teaching in the school is good overall, with some very good teaching seen in all classes. There were no unsatisfactory lessons seen during the inspection. Teachers are well prepared for lessons and use the available time well. Teaching assistants provide good support, especially for pupils with special educational needs, and consequently they make good progress. Work is well planned and classes organised effectively so that more able pupils have work that is well matched to their ability. The teaching of English and mathematics is good throughout the school and the strategies used to teach these subjects are good and effective. Teachers have very good relationships with the pupils and expect them to achieve a lot during lessons. In the very good lessons, teachers promote literacy skills very well, and emphasise meaningful links between subjects very effectively. Explanations are very clear and the purpose of the lesson is shared with the pupils. Within this picture of positive teaching, the teaching of science is not as strong. Teachers do not ensure that pupils are taught the skills necessary to systematically carry out and record investigations.

Teachers’ marking is a positive feature of lessons. As well as making encouraging and constructive comments on work, teachers talk to pupils during lessons. Tasks are discussed and pupils are clear what they could do to improve their work. Homework is good, and used well to reinforce the learning that has taken place in lessons.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. National Curriculum requirements are met and there is a good range of extra-curricular activities. Most of these are open to all pupils in the school, and are very well attended. The local community takes a great interest in the work of the school and this has a very significant impact on its work.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs. They are well supported and make the same good progress as other pupils in the school.
Provision for pupils’ personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school makes very good provision for pupils’ personal development. Provision for pupils’ moral and social is very good, and this results in good behaviour and very good relationships. Provision for pupils’ spiritual and cultural development is good. Staff are very good role models.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The staff take very good care of the pupils. The school has very clear child protection procedures. The rare incidents of bullying are stamped on very quickly. Arrangements for health and safety checks are very thorough.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	Parents have very positive views of the school and are very supportive. They help their children at home and many help in school. The school provides good quality information for parents, including good end of year reports.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher leads and manages the school very well. In this small school all of the staff support each other well, but the co-ordinators, including the headteacher, have to take responsibility for several subjects and this results in them not having enough time to monitor their subjects effectively.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors do a good job. They are very supportive of the school and are well aware of the strengths within, and where developments are needed. They fulfil their statutory responsibilities appropriately.
The school's evaluation of its performance	There are good systems in place for appraising staff and monitoring teaching. This has had a significant impact on raising of standards. Educational and financial decisions are carefully considered to help the school decide whether it is providing best value. For example, the school has effectively evaluated how best to teach the pupils in the mixed age classes.
The strategic use of resources	Specific grant funding is used well and the school's spending is linked to the priorities identified in the school development plan. Resources are good, especially the number of computers available for the pupils to use.
The school's buildings and facilities	The new school building is excellent with many very good facilities. This results in the pupils taking pride in their school and their work and provides a very pleasant working environment for everyone.
Staffing	There is a good match of teachers and learning assistants in the school to meet the demands of the curriculum. They work well together as a team and, consequently, the pupils throughout the school make good progress

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children like school • Children make good progress • Behaviour is good • Teaching is good • The school is approachable • Children are expected to work hard and achieve their best • The school is well led and managed • The school helps the children to become mature and responsible 	

Inspectors agree with all of the positive views expressed by the parents. Pupils are also positive about school. There was a high return rate of the questionnaires and a very small number of parents expressed negative views on homework and the information they get on their children's progress. Inspectors found homework to be more than is normally found in schools, especially for pupils in the lower age classes. Inspectors also found that the school provides a lot of information for parents, but could provide more curriculum information. However, recent evenings arranged by the school for this purpose were poorly attended.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Throughout this report, references to Key Stage 1 relate to the infant years (Years 1 and 2) when pupils are aged 5 to 7 years. The junior years (from Year 3 to Year 6) are referred to as Key Stage 2, when pupils are aged 7 to 11. Children in the reception class, who are aged 5 and under, are considered to be in the Foundation Stage. Schools' test results are compared with the national average, as well as against "similar schools". Schools are grouped as similar according to the proportion of children attending who are known to be eligible for free school meals. In judging standards, inspectors analysed results attained in the national standard assessment tests taken at the end of Years 2 and 6, both in 2002 and in previous years. Inspectors looked at work currently being done in lessons and at work done throughout last year. They listened to children read and discussed children's work with them as well as with their teachers. Whereas judgements on attainment relate to comparisons with nationally expected standards, achievement relates to the progress pupils make and compares how well children do as against their prior attainment. English, mathematics and science are referred to as core subjects, and a degree of priority was given in the inspection to looking at these subjects. Other curriculum subjects are sometimes referred to as non-core or foundation subjects.
2. Standards have risen since the last inspection, faster than the trend seen nationally. The school set ambitious targets for test results in 2002, and exceeded them. Targets for 2003 are equally ambitious. Throughout the school standards are high, except in history where they are below those expected nationally, at both key stages. In the school there are few pupils who take the national tests each year, and the results of one child can significantly affect the overall results. This causes results to fluctuate year on year, but, overall, standards are improving, pupils make good progress and achieve well.
3. When children enter school their skills and abilities vary, but overall they are what could be expected. Most of the children have had pre-school experience and settle happily to the school routines. During their time in the reception year the children make good progress and by the time they enter Year 1, most of them will achieve the Early Learning Goals, and many will exceed them. This is good achievement. More able children work with the pupils in Year 1 and have appropriately challenging work. Less able pupils are supported well and make similar good progress.
4. In the 2002 national tests for the pupils in Year 2 attained standards overall that were above those expected nationally, and above what would be expected given their prior attainment. Standards in reading and writing were particularly high. Standards in mathematics were above expected levels, and, in science, teacher assessments showed that standards were in line with those expected nationally. A significant number of pupils attained the higher level in English and mathematics. These results were reflected in the work seen during the inspection. Pupils make good progress during Key Stage 1 and achieve well.
5. Test results in Year 6 were also high. Overall they were above those expected, especially in English where results were well above those of schools nationally. Results in mathematics were above average and, in science, they were average. Pupils do not do as

well in science because the skills of systematic scientific investigations are not taught systematically. In English and mathematics, a significant number of pupils attained the higher levels. In the work seen during the inspection the standards broadly matched those of the test results. Pupils continue to make good progress in Key Stage 2 and achieve well.

6. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well. They reach levels of attainment that are in line with their abilities. Some do even better, for example, in the 2002 national tests all pupils, including those with special educational needs, reached the nationally expected levels in English, mathematics and science.
7. In subjects, other than English, mathematics and science, where it was possible to judge standards, pupils in both key stages reach standards that are in line with those expected, except in history where standards are below those expected nationally. It was not possible to judge standards in design and technology, physical education and music as too few lessons were seen.
8. Almost all of the parents who returned the questionnaire expressed the view that their children make good progress. Inspectors agree with this view and judge that all children, regardless of ability achieve well in the school.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. Pupil's attitudes and behaviour, identified as a positive aspect during the last inspection, continue to be a strength of the school. Pupils are happy to attend school and take an active part in all aspects of it's life. Pupils are enthusiastic learners who always try their best. In lessons they settle quickly; listen very carefully to their teachers and many hands go up when a question is asked. Concentration is high in most lessons.
10. Behaviour is good both in classrooms and around the school. There have been no exclusions in the school this year. Pupils show respect for the school environment and are polite and friendly. Pupils move sensibly around the building and courteously open doors for visitors. Lunchtimes are relaxed social times where pupils demonstrate very good social skills and chat happily with their friends. In the playground play is lively but good-natured.
11. The quality of relationships amongst pupils is very good. They are confident outgoing children who clearly take a great pride in their school. Pupils are supportive of each other, treating everyone with kindness and respect. There was no evidence of oppressive behaviour observed and pupils have every confidence that, should an incident occur, it will be dealt with promptly and effectively by staff. Pupils work very well together in pairs and small groups, concentrating and collaborating well.
12. Pupils are outgoing and mature. Their personal development is very good. They respect the feelings, values and backgrounds of others and treat each other well. They confidently speak to visiting adults and talk proudly about their school. In the Foundation Stage younger pupils show good independence as they choose activities and resources. Older children take their monitor roles very seriously. The attendance of pupils at extra curricular clubs is high.

13. The school has a very good attendance record. Pupils clearly enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in the consistently high attendance figures, which are within the top 10% nationally. There were very few unauthorised absences during the past year and lateness is rare. Registers are completed promptly and efficiently at the beginning of each session and all lessons start on time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

14. Part of the focus of the inspection was on literacy and numeracy, so priority was given to observing the teaching of English and mathematics. All classes were seen being taught these subjects. A good sample of lessons was also seen in the other core subject of science. In most cases, inspectors were able to observe full lessons and, in judging teaching, inspectors sought evidence that pupils were learning and making progress.
15. Overall the quality of teaching is good, with some very good teaching seen in all classes. There were no unsatisfactory lessons seen during the inspection. Three quarters of the lessons seen were good or better, with one quarter being very good, and this represents good improvement since the last inspection.
16. In the most effective lessons, teachers gave clear explanations and promoted speaking and listening skills well. This enabled pupils to share what they had found out with the rest of their class. A very good example of this was during a geography lesson when all pupils spoke confidently and clearly when reporting back on their findings about modern Greece. Teachers have good subject knowledge and expect pupils to achieve a lot during lessons. Work is very well planned and appropriately matched to the varying abilities within each class. This is particularly important considering that all of the classes are mixed age, and ensures that pupils do not repeat work unnecessarily; nor miss important aspects of any subject. The purpose of each lesson is shared with the pupils and this means time is used well and lessons have a brisk pace. Discussion times at the end of lessons are used well to ensure that pupils have understood the purpose of the lesson.
17. Teachers endeavour to make learning interesting for pupils by making meaningful links between subjects, and this is an important feature of most lessons. Design and technology lessons are used to promote further work on Greece by giving the pupils opportunities to prepare and eat Greek food. Links are further reinforced through art activities where pupils can make their own Greek vases, for example. This ensures that learning is effectively reinforced at every opportunity. In all lessons skills and knowledge are reinforced effectively. Good use is made of information and communication technology, and pupils benefit from the good quality lap top computers that are frequently moved into classrooms to support learning.
18. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers plan work that is well matched to the identified needs of individual pupils. Pupils receiving 'additional' lessons, in literacy and numeracy for example, benefit from working in small groups on specific skills. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to the progress pupils make. They provide individuals and groups of pupils with appropriate support. This encourages and enables them to complete the tasks set, or to play a full part in the lesson. For example, pupils are given unobtrusive help during discussions so that they play an active part. Pupils also benefit from the work of adult volunteers who help them, especially with reading.

19. The quality of teachers' marking is particularly good. Work is marked, wherever possible, when the child is present and tasks are discussed. When this is not possible then teachers write encouraging remarks in books, and follow these with points that the child could consider in order to improve their work. Pupils respond positively to this, and most of the improvements are carried out. Teachers manage pupils very well, and, as a result, pupils work hard and concentrate well.
20. Within this picture of positive teaching there is a weakness in the teaching of science. Teachers do not always ensure that pupils learn to systematically use scientific language. Although the teaching of science is satisfactory overall, there are missed opportunities for pupils to predict and experiment in a methodical manner.

HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?

21. The school offers its pupils a wide and rich curriculum that is well planned. For example, topics that are being studied in one subject are linked very well to other areas of learning. Work in geography and history on modern and ancient Greece is enhanced by opportunities for pupils to look at Greek art and food. Teachers provide pupils with the chance to make their own Greek pots, and to prepare a Greek feast using appropriate food. This results in the pupils being keen, enthusiastic and eager to learn.
22. Pupils with special educational needs are encouraged to play a full part in lessons and in the life of the school generally. Planning ensures that they are able to take a full part in lessons and one to one teaching is organised when appropriate. In addition the school provides successful lessons in literacy and numeracy for pupils identified as needing extra support in order to reach the nationally expected levels in English and mathematics. The national strategies have been implemented well and this has raised standards.
23. A good range of extra-curricular activities is available to all pupils. These range from French club to line dancing, and there is a club meeting on almost every day of the week. This is more than is normally seen in such a small school. The pupils join in enthusiastically. The contribution of the wider community is excellent. Some of the governors run clubs and the village takes a great interest in the working of the school. The local community has been instrumental in the provision of the new school building, enabling the school to have it's own playing field and new photocopier. A very effective partnership with local schools makes a very good contribution to pupils' learning. Local small schools have formed an association whereby all of the pupils from each school meet in year groups to experience a wide variety of activities. These include a residential trip, theatre visits and geography field trips. This alliance also enables local poets to come into school, and for local artists to work with the pupils. The local high school is part of the "alliance" and supports the socialisation of all of the pupils. The local pre-school is very involved in the work of the school and this ensures that children are happy and settled when they start school. Throughout the school everyone is encouraged to join in and fully participate in all activities.
24. Overall the school caters for pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. Spiritual development is fostered well through the use of assemblies and in the planning of provision for religious education. In an observed assembly the local vicar explained the significance of Advent well to younger children in the school Moments of spirituality occur spontaneously during lessons. In a design and technology lesson, for

example, pupils were very excited about preparing Greek food and were very respectful when tasting the work of others.

25. The school promotes both the moral and social development very well due to its strong caring ethos. Staff provide very good role models to pupils and expectations of how everyone should be treated are high. The strong family atmosphere in the school results in older pupils spontaneously looking after younger ones, particularly those new to the school. Pupils are constantly encouraged to appreciate the difference between right and wrong and consider other's feelings. The school has raised money for world-wide charities and pupils understand about some of the issues in the third world. Pupils have many opportunities to work together and develop socially. Older pupils are able to go on a residential field trip, which is very popular, and many other outings are arranged for pupils across the school. The school plans to start up a school council in the near future, which will ensure that this area of the pupils' development is enhanced still further.
26. The school works hard to develop pupils cultural awareness and this results in good provision. Multi-cultural elements are effectively planned into lessons in English, art, religious education and geography. A good range of visitors come into the school such as African drummers and storytellers. A poet is a frequent visitor and a local artist has also completed a project with pupils on making banners. Older pupils current topic on Ancient Greece has been used well to promote this area with pupils observed making Greek food in cookery and decorated clay pots in art.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

27. The school takes very good care of its pupils. All staff know pupils very well and give them individual academic and pastoral support. Parents are very happy with the care taken of their children.
28. The school has very clear procedures for dealing with child protection issues. The headteacher is the person designated to deal with any concerns and all staff have had training on the necessary procedures to follow. The school has produced its own policy for this area, which are based on local guidelines. Useful, informal notes are kept on any possible welfare concerns of pupils. Good arrangements are in place for first aid and pupils are aware of who to see if hurt or feeling unwell. Three staff members are currently first aid trained and each classroom has its own first aid kit. The monitoring and promoting of pupils' attendance is appropriately dealt with, ensuring that the high attendance levels are maintained. The arrangements for health and safety are very thorough. Safe working conditions for staff and pupils are fully maintained by the efficient caretaker. Risk assessments are fully in place and completed termly by the headteacher and governor responsible for health and safety.
29. Strategies for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are good, enabling all pupils to make progress in their learning. Pupils value and respect the systems of rewards and sanctions. Incidents of bullying are stamped on very quickly and the caring ethos of the school ensures this. The pupils themselves do not consider bullying to be a problem in the school. Induction into the school is handled very well with many opportunities provided for children to visit before joining the reception class. The school's very close links with its feeder pre-school also ensures this.

30. The school does not currently have formal procedures for monitoring and promoting pupils' personal development. However the small numbers in the school and family atmosphere ensures that this is well catered for. Pupils annual reports include appropriate comments by the class teacher on each pupil's personal development. A good emphasis is placed on personal and social development in the Foundation Stage and children settle well into school life. Older pupils are able to take some responsibility for their learning when given their targets in English, mathematics and science.

31. Assessment procedures in the school are good. Teachers carry out regular tests to ensure that pupils make good progress in reading. Work is carefully marked and the progress each pupil has made is recorded. Pupils in Key Stage 2 take the optional tests at the end of each year and, again, progress is recorded. This information is shared with each pupil and used very effectively to set targets in English and mathematics. All of the recorded information shows that pupils make good progress.
32. Pupils with special educational needs are assessed appropriately. However, these assessments are not detailed enough, nor focussed sufficiently, on the targets and strategies identified for each pupil. The noting of progress is often vague or anecdotal. This means that new targets are not always appropriate as they do not build on what has gone before. The provision for pupils with statements of special educational needs is good. Pupils are supported well and make good progress.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

33. Parents are very happy with the education and care the school provides. Over 60% of them responded to the questionnaires before the inspection, which is an unusually high figure, almost all speak very positively about the school.
34. The school has established good links with its parents. Staff are friendly, open and welcoming. The headteacher is very visible around the school and readily makes herself available to meet parents, should they have a concern. The school keeps the parents of pupils with special educational needs fully informed about the arrangements being made to meet these needs. Parents are involved in the reviews of progress carried out at regular intervals throughout the year. The school also makes useful suggestions, to all parents, about the ways parents might help their children at home.
35. The quality of information provided for parents is generally good. Very useful general information is provided in the form of half termly newsletters. The prospectus is informative and clearly written. Consultation meetings are held termly with annual written reports issued in the summer term. These reports are well written and give good information on work covered in all subjects with particular emphasis on progress in English, mathematics and science. Attendance at curriculum events for parents has been low in the past although, encouragingly, a recent evening with a local poet was well attended and popular. The school does not currently send home written guidance for parents on what their children will be learning each term, and parents expressed the view that they would value this, so that they could support their children further.
36. Parents are supportive of the school and its work. Attendance at assemblies, and performances is always good with over 95% of parents coming in to school to speak to teachers on consultation evenings. The well organised Friends of Gislingham School provides very good support for the school. Regular and varied fund raising and social events are organised and these are well supported by both parents and the local community. Funds raised are used well to provide extra resources for the school. Many parents as well as grandparents and other members of the local community help regularly in the classrooms, on outings and in the library. The parent governors are committed and hardworking, representing parents views well. Across the school parents support their children's learning well through the homework scheme.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

37. The leadership and management of the school are very good. The headteacher is an experienced and knowledgeable professional who has a very clear vision of how the school is to develop. She has very successfully led the school forward so that there has been very good improvement since the last inspection. The staff and governing body provide good support for the headteacher and the improvements have been due to good team work. There is a spirit in the school of co-operation and a shared commitment to improve. This is reflected in the ethos of the school in which relationships are very good and pupils are valued. In this atmosphere, the school carries out its aims very well. Pupils are confident, well behaved and well motivated to do their best in all aspects of school life.
38. The headteacher is fully involved in every aspect of the school. She has a heavy teaching commitment as well as her management responsibilities. This means that she has a thorough knowledge of all pupils and staff. This knowledge and her monitoring of teaching has helped show where improvements can be made. Teachers' training needs have been clearly identified and matched well to the needs of the school. All teachers have been set targets for improvement that has helped significantly raise the standard of teaching since the last inspection.
39. That inspection identified the need to develop the roles of subject co-ordinators. Although a start has been made in addressing this, at present co-ordinators play a limited part in the development of their subjects. With a small number of staff, teachers have several responsibilities. Although they have some 'in school' time devoted to this, it is not feasible to provide sufficient for all to carry out all that is needed for every subject. The school is aware of this and under the guidance of the local authority, will be looking at ways of tackling this. The co-ordination of the school's special needs provision is not satisfactory. Although pupils with special educational needs make good progress overall, the recording of their progress is not detailed enough to help teachers set new targets for these pupils. The reviews of individual education plans are too vague and do not evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies used.
40. The governing body is carrying out its statutory duties appropriately, and do a good job. They are well informed by the reports they receive from the headteacher and staff. Several governors are regular visitors to the school, working alongside teachers or supporting school work. The Chair and Vice Chair are frequent visitors and enjoy a good liaison with the headteacher. Through these means and contacts, governors have a good idea of what the school does well, which has enabled them to play a useful part in its successful development.
41. All staff share in the identification of ways to improve the school and in the annual drawing up of development plans. Governors scrutinise these plans critically before final decisions are taken. They take good financial measures to support these initiatives and make adequate provision against possible future contingencies. Governors and school staff give careful consideration to the likely effectiveness of purchases and the initiatives it plans to make. This has meant, for example, that class sizes are small and teaching groups well organised. These have been successful in helping pupils achieve well overall. Standards in ICT have risen as a result of the purchase of laptop computers and the quality of other subjects raised by the purchase of resources.

42. The school has good systems for ensuring that day to day finances are well managed. Spending is well monitored through regular financial reports and meetings and technology is used appropriately. The school receives extra money from a local charity and this is spent wisely on, for example, learning resources. The school has a high carry forward in the budget, but this has been identified, appropriately, for spending on equipping the new building. The school's new accommodation is excellent and provides pupils with a warm and welcoming environment in which to learn. Rooms are spacious and well laid out. There is a large attractive hall, outside play area for the youngest children and the school has a large playing field. Learning resources are good and well used. Pupils also benefit from the generous provision of learning support assistants. They play an important role in the teaching of pupils giving good support to individuals and groups of pupils.
43. The school's leadership and management have significantly improved since the last inspection and the school is well placed to continue to improve.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

Inspectors have identified the following key issues for action. In order to improve the standard of education provided to pupils, the headteacher, staff and governors should: *(Paragraph references are in brackets)*

KEY ISSUE 1

Raise standards in science by:

- Providing more opportunities for pupils to carry out investigations as part of science lessons.
- Systematically teaching the skills necessary to carry out scientific investigations and experiments.
- Planning opportunities for scientific enquiries.
(Paragraphs 5,20,67,68,70)

KEY ISSUE 2

Develop pupils' skills in historical research by:

- Providing a range of historical evidence so that pupils can extend their historical skills.
(Paragraphs 2,7,81,82)

KEY ISSUE 3

Reassess the role of the co-ordinators so that they may be more effective in monitoring and developing subjects within the school by:

- Concentrating on one subject to be developed.
- Working as a whole staff team to develop that subject, identifying the strengths and weaknesses.
- Monitoring thoroughly, as a team.
- Deciding on the next subject to be prioritised.

(Paragraphs 10,39,65,70,74,77,83,91)

In addition to the key issues above, the following, less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the governors' action plan.

- Improve the targets on individual education plans so that they are more specific.
(Paragraphs 32,29)
- Improve the standard of singing throughout the school.
(Paragraph 90)
- Providing parents with more curriculum information.
(Paragraph 35)
- Planning more opportunities for pupils to use data handling in mathematics.
(Paragraph 62)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	16
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	19

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	4	8	4	0	0	0
Percentage	0	25	50	25	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than 6 percentage points. Figures may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	0	68
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	3

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	13

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils learning English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	3
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	97.1
National comparative data	94.1

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for 2001, which is the most recent year for which national comparative data is available.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2002	7	3	10

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	9	9	8
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90	90	80
	National	84	86	90

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	9	8	9
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90	80	90
	National	85	89	89

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year. Due to small numbers, the attainment of boys and girls is not reported separately.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2002	8	7	15

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	15	15	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	100	100	100
	National	75	73	86

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*

	Total	14	14	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	93	93	100
	National	73	74	82

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year. Due to the small numbers, the attainment of boys and girls is not reported separately.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	0	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Financial information

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.1
Average class size	23

Financial year	2001/2002
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Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	55

	£
Total income	247,451
Total expenditure	231,330
Expenditure per pupil	3,126
Balance brought forward from previous year	18,824

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	0
Total number of education support staff	0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	0
Number of pupils per FTE adult	0

Balance carried forward to next year	34,945
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2.2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0.2
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

Number of questionnaires returned

62%

68
42

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	50	50	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	52	45	0	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	43	55	0	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	21	59	13	3	5
The teaching is good.	48	43	0	0	10
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	35	50	13	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	57	43	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	52	43	0	0	5
The school works closely with parents.	29	62	10	0	0

The school is well led and managed.

The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.

The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.

(figures may not sum to 100 due to rounding)

48	57	0	0	2
52	38	0	0	10
38	48	13	0	3

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

44. Children enter the school in the term in which they are five years old. When they come into school they have the skills and knowledge that would be expected for children of their age. Almost all of the children have attended the pre-school in the village and there is good liaison between the school and the pre-school. The teacher visits the children before they come into school and the pre-school leaders both work in the school. This provides very good continuity for the children, and, as a result, they settle quickly into school routines. During their first year in school the children make good progress, and most will achieve the early learning goals for children in the Foundation Stage, and many will exceed them.
45. Teaching, in all areas of learning, in the Foundation Stage is good. Work is well matched to the abilities of the individual children. The staff have good procedures for assessing children's' progress. These assessments are used effectively to thoroughly plan work and activities that interest and excite the children. Learning is fun. The teacher in the Foundation Stage is very knowledgeable about how young children learn. She is able to balance appropriately the amount of adult input is needed so that the children can experiment for themselves as well as learning new skills. A very good example of this was during an art activity. The children were given white paint to create angels for a display and were told that they had to make these angels bright and interesting. By the end of the lesson the children had used a wide variety of colours, mixing them to make individual pieces of work.
46. The accommodation for the children is very good. There is a play area, dedicated for the children's' use outside of the classroom where they are able to practise the skills of riding a selection of wheeled toys. An area for the children to plant seed and flowers in contributes to an understanding of their growing world.

Personal, social and emotional development

47. There is good provision for children's' personal, social and emotional development. The good liaison with the pre-school enables the children to settle in quickly. They form good relationships and work together well, sharing and taking turns appropriately. Behaviour is good in the classroom, although some of the younger children can become excitable when moving around the school. The children concentrate well and are able to select their own activities with enthusiasm. There is a good balance between the activities that the children choose for themselves and those that adults lead. This means that the children learn new skills and knowledge appropriately, whilst still being able to experiment for themselves. The children learn about the importance of celebrations such as harvest and Christenings, and begin to understand that we are all different.

Communication, language and literacy

48. Good emphasis is given to developing the children' communication, language and literacy skills. The children listen attentively to their teacher and to each other. They are encouraged to talk and discuss various topics, and most join in enthusiastically when sharing their news. There is a wide variety of books for the children to use, a published

scheme, as well as story and factual books. The children are able to handle books correctly and are beginning to read confidently. They can retell stories, such as Handa's Surprise, confidently. They learn about letter names and sounds and use this knowledge to begin to write for themselves. Correct letter formation is taught effectively so that writing is legible and neat. More able children can write their own sentences, whilst the less able are beginning to make marks on paper to represent writing. The children are able to use the role play area sensibly so that they can make up their own stories and act out their experiences.

Mathematical development

49. The provision for mathematical development is good. The children count up to ten and beyond, confidently matching one to one. They learn a variety of mathematical vocabulary and understand about ideas such as longer or shorter than. Resources are used well to reinforce these ideas and the children enjoy using these. The children learn about a variety of shapes and are able to identify the simple ones confidently. During number and shape games activities, speaking and listening skills are emphasised well so that the children learn a lot during these sessions. The children sort by colour and size and recognise who has the highest and who has the lowest scores in the games. Number rhymes and songs are used effectively to reinforce counting backwards and forwards and introduces the children to the notion of addition and subtraction.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

50. The activities planned to extend the children's' knowledge and understanding of the world are good. Using the very good outside area, the children plant and grow their own seeds. They walk in the local area to listen to sounds and observe what is going on around them. The children understand about the weather and enjoy dressing appropriately so that they can go and splash in the puddles, learning the vocabulary associated with the different types of weather. Geographical skills are emphasised well. The children learn about various parts of the world through a teddy bear that accompanies anyone on trips in this country and abroad. Photographs are taken and shared with the class, and the bear's travels are followed on a map displayed in the classroom. There are good resources to encourage the children to design and build their own models and speaking skills are encouraged well when the children explain clearly about their work. There are computers available and the children use these confidently with increasing skills.

Physical development

51. The children's' physical skills are promoted well. Using the outside area the children ride a variety of wheeled toys and learn to balance, run safely and play together thoughtfully. Large apparatus in the school hall is used well to enable the children to climb and develop their large muscles. In creative activities the children use a variety of tools, such as brushes and scissors, safely and with increasing control. During handwriting sessions the children learn to hold a pencil correctly and use this knowledge when using pens, brushes and other tools. They are beginning to understand about keeping healthy and looking after themselves through activities such as dressing appropriately for the weather conditions.

Creative development

52. The provision for children's' creative development is good. The teacher has balanced effectively the need for the children to learn new skills, such as colour mixing and using

scissors safely, with the need for them to be able to select their own materials and experiment for themselves. Using the skills and knowledge they had learnt, the children have produced a very good display of portraits in the style of Picasso. When using the role play area the children make up their own stories and play together well. They use the sand and water safely and begin to understand about capacity, as well as what wet and dry sand will do. They sing enthusiastically and enjoy learning new songs.

ENGLISH

53. In the 2002 tests, pupils in Year 6 attained standards that were well above the national average. All of the pupils reached the expected standard, and many exceeded it. This represents very good achievement, and the work seen during the inspection reflects these high standards. Pupils are confident, expressive readers who speak clearly in class and listen attentively to each other. When writing, pupils compose stories and poems using a variety of ideas, and they write factual pieces well.
54. Pupils in Year 2 attained standards in the national tests that were well above average. Again, these standards were reflected in the work seen during the inspection and represents very good achievement. Pupils write legibly with well formed, joined writing. They are keen readers and understand how important it is to listen carefully to each other.
55. Pupils of all abilities achieve very well. Those who are more able are challenged appropriately in lessons. Work is planned effectively to take account of what the pupils already know, and consequently they make good progress. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well in class, and, as a result, make good progress.
56. The teaching of English throughout the school is good. The staff have effectively planned the curriculum to meet the needs of all pupils in the mixed age classes. Within each class the activities are planned for each age group and the more able pupils, for example, work alongside older pupils so that activities are appropriate for their ability level. Teachers plan many opportunities for the pupils to develop their thinking and speaking skills. For example, in a lesson with older pupils the teacher presented them with a text that had many mistakes in it. The pupils were encouraged to discuss this text in pairs and report back their findings. The class enjoyed this and joined in enthusiastically. Teachers have very good relationships with the pupils and expect them to achieve well. Consequently behaviour in lessons is good, pupils work well together and get a lot done. Marking is a particularly strong feature of the teaching of English. Teachers talk to pupils during lessons and suggest improvements. This dialogue means that pupils are clear how they could improve their work. When work is marked without the pupils being present, teachers make comments and suggestions in the books. Appropriate praise is given, but points on how to improve work are made. These comments are followed up so pupils know that corrections have to be completed. A very good example of this was seen in a Year 6 book. The teacher had asked the child to think about an aspect of their writing on Greek myths. The child responded in a positive way and completed a piece of work to a high standard.
57. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use a range of teaching strategies to ensure that pupils make good progress. For the younger pupils, phonics are used effectively to support reading and writing. Lessons move on at a brisk pace, and pupils respond with keenness. Teachers give the pupils the opportunity to experience a wide range of writing styles. Pupils in Year 6, for example, discuss the characters in the book *Goodnight Mr.*

Tom, and give reasoned arguments about their likes and dislikes of the various characters. Teachers set targets for pupils in both reading and writing. This shows pupils what they have to do next, and how they can attain higher levels. Teachers use information and communication technology well in lessons. The laptop computers are moved into class to enable pupils to write and redraft work quickly and efficiently.

58. The co-ordination of English is good. Much work has been carried out to ensure that all of the pupils are taught well in the mixed age classes. The headteacher is the co-ordinator and has a heavy teaching load to enable pupils to be taught in smaller classes. This is very effective as it means that pupils have work that is well matched to their ability. The co-ordinator monitors well, but has responsibility for other subjects as well. The curriculum for English is significantly enriched by visits outside school. The older pupils have attended a performance of *Midsummer Nights Dream* and have written some very thoughtful pieces about the play. Visitors to the school have also had a positive impact on the pupils' learning. Two poets have been into school and worked with most of the pupils. This has enabled the pupils to write poems of a high quality. Pupils have written poems in the style of Rupert Brooke, and have experimented with writing in Old English. These combined factors, good teaching, leadership and management, and the curriculum enrichment has resulted in pupils achieving very well and standards being well above average.
59. Overall there has been very good improvement since the last inspection. Standards have risen and the curriculum has been enriched by many opportunities for the pupils to enjoy English.

MATHEMATICS

60. Pupils in Year 6 achieve well and reach levels of attainment that are above the national average. In the 2002 national tests all pupils reached the expected standards, although the more able pupils did not do as well as expected. However, the number of pupils in the year group was very small and the results of one child affects the overall grade significantly.
61. Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 is above the national average. Pupils achieve well, as their skills and knowledge, in mathematics, are similar to those expected nationally when they start school. Pupils' numeric skills are well developed so that they use numbers confidently. They know different methods of multiplying and dividing for example with most pupils using two and three digit numbers. They have good strategies for solving problems mentally, using their knowledge of tables and number bonds to twenty. They also use doubling and halving techniques with more able pupils rounding numbers. Pupils have a good knowledge of the properties of two-dimensional shapes, the measurement of time and can accurately measure length using centimetres and millimetres.
62. Pupils build well on their number skills developed in the younger classes. They use more complex numbers, percentages and different fractions including decimals to two places. Their knowledge of the properties of two and three-dimensional shapes has increased and they recognise lines of symmetry on regular shapes. Teachers also provide more opportunities for pupils to use their knowledge in solving problems involving time, money and number investigations. There is little evidence however that pupils have enough

regular work on handling data, including the use of information technology to construct, for example, a variety of charts, graphs and tables.

63. The standard of teaching overall is good and pupils learn well. This is because teachers' planning meets the needs of the different ages and abilities of their pupils. This was illustrated well in one lesson in which pupils were learning about the measurement of time. Their teacher introduced the topic astutely by getting all pupils to practise counting backwards and forwards in fives. Work was then given to different pupils that matched their levels of understanding so all pupils made good progress. These pupils understood what they had learnt and proudly told their teacher what it was they now knew. Teachers have established good relations with their pupils, manage them well and give them stimulating activities to do. Consequently pupils are interested, keen to answer, concentrate well and try hard to succeed. In an older class for example, the quick-fire discussions about the properties of two-dimensional shapes kept all pupils alert and concentrating. They responded well to the challenge and were keen to tell what they knew and were learning. Their teacher made good use of questions and the responses pupils made. These were expanded on and used well to give pupils strategies for solving problems or to understand the ideas being discussed.
64. The assessment of pupils is good so work is appropriately matched to what pupils know. Within lessons teachers check on what is being learned and react accordingly. For example in one lesson, the teacher spent considerable time explaining the language of subtraction when it became apparent pupils did not understand this as well as had been thought. Teachers also use assessment information to set pupils individual targets each term and to identify those who need 'extra' lessons. The school has used such lessons successfully to improve the achievements of pupils. All teachers give pupils praise for their efforts and usually add comments to help them to improve their work.
65. The quality of teaching and the standards pupils are reaching have improved well since the last inspection. This has been brought about by a number of improvements to the school's work. Pupils' answers in tests have been carefully checked to identify areas of strength and those that need working on. The headteacher has observed lessons and targets for development given to teachers and there have been improvements in teachers' planning. The school has used the advice it has received from the local authority well and successfully carried out the suggestions given. The resources for mathematics are good and used well. The co-ordinator supports colleagues by checking lessons plans and by attending training to raise standards still further. At present though there is too little observation of lessons by the co-ordinator or scrutiny of pupils' work to share successful approaches to learning and identify areas for improvement.

SCIENCE

66. Results in national assessments for pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 have fluctuated considerably since the last inspection. This is normal when only a small number of pupils is tested, because the performance of one child can affect the overall result markedly. In 2002, the results of teachers' assessments for pupils at the end of Year 2 were close to the national average. Almost all pupils reached the expected level of attainment, and an above average proportion gained the higher level. At the end of Year 6, results were also close to the national average. All pupils reached the expected level of attainment, but the proportion gaining the higher level was lower than in similar schools.

Over the last four years, and particularly since 2000, the school's results at the end of Year 6 have improved at a rate better than the national trend.

67. Inspection evidence about the attainment of pupils in the current Year 2 and Year 6 shows a similar picture to the 2002 national assessments. In Year 2, pupils' attainment is close to national expectations, as at the last inspection. In their current work, pupils have been learning about their bodies, the ways in which they are all different, and how they can keep healthy. With guidance, they carry out simple investigations, such as finding out what happens to their heart rate when they exercise. Their recording of results is of the standard expected for this age, and they reach a reasonable conclusion based on their findings. They have also learnt about the nutritional value of various foods and how these contribute to a healthy diet. In the lesson observed, Year 2 pupils understood that substances, such as medicines, can be harmful. Based on the work seen, pupils' achievements during Year 1 and 2 are satisfactory. They build their factual knowledge steadily, but have too few opportunities to develop their skills in the experimental and investigative elements of the subject.
68. Pupils' attainment in the current Year 6 is close to national expectations overall. However, as this is a small group, and a few of the pupils have been identified as having special educational needs, results in national tests next year may fall. In the lesson seen, where pupils were planning an experiment to find the best way to muffle an alarm clock, they drew well on their previous factual work on sound to suggest ways in which they might achieve the desired result. All the pupils had a clear understanding that the test must be fair, and they could identify the variables, but there was some confusion about isolating one variable, as shown when pupils thought they could test the type of material used and its thickness at the same time. More able went on to plan their own experiment, showing the skills expected for Year 6, but a few less able pupils needed, and received, a good deal of adult support. Pupils' past work shows that their factual knowledge of science develops steadily. For example, pupils know that sounds are vibrations and, as a result, pass through solids, liquids and gases with varying degrees of success. Previous work about forces and friction, and concerning habitats and food chains also shows that pupils are developing a good factual understanding of aspects of science. Key concepts and scientific vocabulary are taught well. Pupils' achievements during Key Stage 2 are satisfactory, particularly in the factual aspects of the subject but, as in Key Stage 1, the skills of investigation and experiment are not taught systematically enough, so this is a weaker element of pupils' achievements.
69. Of the three lessons observed, teaching was good in one and satisfactory in two. Taking this evidence alongside pupils' past work, the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Teachers plan series of lessons and individual lessons carefully so that pupils build their knowledge and understanding of science steadily. They review and consolidate pupils' existing learning effectively at the beginning of lessons. These lively discussions were a good feature of all of the lessons seen, with teachers' astute questioning encouraging pupils to share their ideas. For example, Year 3 and 4 pupils revised what they knew about air resistance before carrying out an experiment to find out whether the size of a parachute affects the time it takes to fall. Teachers explain concepts clearly, as was seen in a lesson for Years 5 and 6 when the teacher used diagrams of the molecules in solids, liquids and gases to show how sound would pass most effectively through a solid. Teachers use a good variety of methods and strategies to support pupils' learning, such as paired discussion and small group practical work. These help pupils to understand what they are learning, and adults support them well, particularly any pupils who have special

educational needs. Although these good features ensure that pupils enjoy their science lessons, teachers do not always plan or take sufficient opportunities to develop pupils' skills in scientific methods. For example, opportunities to predict what might happen, to test predictions methodically and to draw conclusions are not a strong feature of pupils' past work. In only one of the lessons seen was this cycle of scientific enquiry given due importance. As a result, pupils' skills in this aspect of science are not as strong as in their factual knowledge. For the older, higher attaining pupils, whilst they were challenged orally by the work, not enough emphasis was placed on systematic, high-quality recording of their method, findings and conclusions.

70. The curriculum is suitably broad and planning has improved since the last inspection, but there is still too little emphasis on learning through scientific enquiry. Experimental work tends to be planned as a separate activity within a topic, rather than being the vehicle through which science is taught. Pupils' skills in subjects such as mathematics and ICT are developed well through the links teachers make with science work. Pupils are assessed at the end of each unit of work, so teachers can see how much they have learnt. However, as this assessment is largely factual, and pupils do not meet the same topic again for some time, the information has limited use in planning the next steps in learning. There is no systematic assessment of pupils' scientific skills. Management of the subject across the school is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has a reasonable understanding of existing strengths and weaknesses, but has had little opportunity to monitor the quality of teaching and learning to identify areas for development precisely. Therefore, the science targets in the school improvement plan are very broad, and there is not subject action plan. The new school building provides very good facilities for teaching science, particularly the spacious practical area, and resources are good. The school has consolidated the improvement reported at the last inspection, but has not yet tackled a few specific weaknesses in pupils' learning.

ART AND DESIGN

71. There were no art lessons seen during the inspection. Judgements have been made by looking at pupils' work and displays around the school. From this available evidence pupils, at both key stages, attain standards that are in line with those expected nationally.
72. By the end of Year 2, pupils look closely at objects and draw them accurately. They have experienced working with clay and have designed articles, such as a Greek plate. Pupils in Year 1 have looked at the work of Picasso and painted portraits in his style. Pupils in Year 6 evaluate their work and are beginning to form opinions about the work of others. Throughout Key Stage 2 pupils experience working with clay and make good progress in this aspect of their work. For example, they are able to make thumb pots in Year 3, and by Year 6 they are able to make clay tiles. All of this work is linked effectively to history. Pupils make their own vases based on Greek designs, and they have made Viking helmets using paper and glue. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory.
73. Art and design is systematically taught in the school and planned effectively so that pupils do not repeat work. All pupils have sketch books, and these are used well so that pupils' designs and ideas can be recorded. Skills are developed appropriately and information and communication technology is used well to support pupils' learning. Art and design make a significant contribution to the cultural development of the pupils as they learn about other artists and civilisations, such as the Ancient Greeks and Vikings.

74. The co-ordination of art and design is satisfactory, although the co-ordinator has a heavy work load as she co-ordinates many subjects. This limits her effectiveness in monitoring the standards of art throughout the school. Resources are good and this results in pupils having access to a wide range of materials. Work is displayed well around the school and this helps pupils take a great interest in their own work, and that of others.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

75. Only a brief part of one design and technology lesson was observed, and there was very little evidence of pupils' past work. Therefore, it is not possible to make secure judgements about pupils' attainment, their achievements or the quality of teaching and learning. In the one session observed, the pupils really enjoyed making 'honey puffs' using bread dough, evaluating a range of natural yoghurts, and making filo pastry parcels with sweet mincemeat. This work was usefully linked to their history topic about Ancient Greece, and to art lessons where pupils made clay pots in the style of the Ancient Greeks. The three adults involved gave the pupils considerable individual support, teaching them the skills needed for each of the activities. The finished products were evaluated, and enjoyed, by everyone.
76. It is a weakness that the school does not keep a substantial portfolio of pupils' past work but, from the limited photographic evidence, and teachers' planning, it is clear that the curriculum meets requirements and enables pupils to design, plan, make and evaluate a range of products. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 have made their own story books, with flaps and moving parts, learning how to make the levers and pivots necessary to control the mechanisms. Attractive quilted panels have been designed and made by all the pupils, showing aspects of their old school building. These now provides a lasting memory as they adorn the new one. Year 6 pupils made puppets from wood and fabric, learning how to design them so that they would be able to control the movements. These examples show that pupils have the opportunity to work with a good range of materials.
77. Organisation of the subject across the school is satisfactory. A good feature is the way in which design and technology projects are carefully integrated with work in other subjects, making work more meaningful to the pupils. Although the co-ordinator has a sound grasp of strengths and weaknesses, and there are plans to focus on developing pupils' skills more systematically, she has not had sufficient opportunity to monitor the standard of pupils' work or the quality of teaching and learning. She provides good support for teachers' planning. The spacious practical area in the new school building provides very good facilities for the subject.

GEOGRAPHY

78. Pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 attain standards in geography that are in line with those expected, and their achievement is satisfactory. Pupils study a variety of locations and compare their own village with places such as Uganda and nearby Bury St. Edmunds. Younger pupils learn about the weather in this country whilst the older ones look at the climate in countries such as Greece. Work is linked very effectively to other subjects, such as history, where the topic of ancient Greeks, for example, is used as a starting point for learning about Greece today.
79. In the lessons seen, the teaching of geography throughout the school is good. Work is planned well over a period of time so that pupils do not repeat topics. Or miss out on aspects of geography. Teachers are very knowledgeable and expect the pupils to get a lot done in lessons. This was

particularly evident in a very good lesson where a class was learning about modern Greece by looking at photographs. The teacher had provided evidence of many aspects of Greek life and expected pupils to look at this evidence and draw their own conclusions. Pupils were very perceptive and learnt a lot during this lesson. Speaking skills were promoted well and pupils spoke to the whole class about what they had found out. Progress is planned effectively so that pupils build on the skills and knowledge that they have already learnt. So, for example, whilst pupils in Year 1 learn about different types of weather, by the time pupils are in Year 3, they are expected to produce their own weather reports using appropriate symbols.

80. The geography co-ordinator is new to the post and is very enthusiastic. Resources are good and this results in pupils being interested in lessons. Information and communication technology is used well to support learning in class. For example, by using a digital camera pupils record their work when they are out and about. The curriculum is further enriched by visits into the locality, as well as by the work carried out with other local schools. This involves pupils in all years working with other similar aged pupils to learn about various aspects of geography. This has a significant positive impact on pupils' social development.

HISTORY

81. No history lessons were observed, but evidence from teachers' planning and pupils' work indicates that standards of attainment are below national expectations at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. This is because, whilst pupils learn facts about the historical period they are studying, they do not develop the skills they need to find out about and interpret a range of historical evidence. For example, Year 6 pupils know a good deal about how the Ancient Greeks lived, but they have not used a range of sources, to find out about the past, or thought about how historical events have an impact on the future. As a result, pupils' achievements are unsatisfactory across the school, particularly during Key Stage 2.
82. At the time of the inspection, all pupils were studying the Ancient Greek civilization for their history topic. Throughout the school, teachers aim to develop pupils' sense of chronology by using a time line. In Year 2, however, this spans from 800 BC to 2000 AD, shows five major historical periods, some of which the pupils have not studied, and does not extend pupils' understanding at an appropriate level. In all classes, pupils have learnt a suitable variety of information about the Ancient Greeks, such as their alphabet, their artistic tradition, the city states that were the basis for government, and special events such as the Olympic Games. In Year 6, a good piece of work identifies similarities and differences between the ancient Olympics and those held today. One pupil records the interesting fact that, "If a woman was caught watching the games, the penalty was death" but, whilst this could have been extended to explore the points of view of men and women, the opportunity was not taken. In general, factual work is not extended sufficiently to introduce the important historical skills required by the national curriculum.
83. Organisation of the subject across the school is unsatisfactory because, although the need to place greater emphasis on improving pupils' skills has been recognised in the school improvement plan, insufficient action has been taken. The co-ordinator has a partial understanding of current strengths and weaknesses, but has had little opportunity to monitor pupils' work or the quality of teaching and learning in lessons. As a result, there is no focused action plan for improvement. Visits to places of historical interest, such as Colchester, and visiting experts, such as a re-creation of life during the blitz in World War II, enliven the curriculum. Insufficient use is made, in lessons, of the school's own historical resources, as seen in a fascinating display of old class photographs and extracts from the school log book dating back to the early part of the last century.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

84. By the end of Year 2 pupils attainment is similar to that expected nationally. Their basic keyboard and mouse skills are appropriate, they access information from CD-ROMS and use programs in different curriculum areas. Pupils are beginning to use two hands to type and are familiar with many of the computer's word processing functions. They have used the computer to program a floor robot and have constructed simple graphs using their own data.
85. Skills learnt in the younger classes are built on appropriately. By the time they are eleven, pupils attainment is in line with national expectations. Since the last inspection the school has purchased a lot more equipment which has significantly increased the opportunities pupils have to reach the required standards. Pupils' achievement, overall, is satisfactory.

86. Too few lessons were observed during the inspection to make an overall judgement about the standard of teaching. In the lessons seen teaching was satisfactory. Teachers are beginning to use computers as a normal part of all lessons. For example, in one literacy lesson, nearly half of the pupils used laptop computers to draft their work. In a science lesson, data-logging equipment was used well to measure the sound of an alarm clock muffled in a box. In an older class pupils designed posters to persuade people to visit 'their' resort for a holiday. In these lessons teachers had a good knowledge of the programs used and so could provide the level of support and questioning to help pupils learn.
87. The recent move to new premises has provided the school with an excellent suite in which large groups of pupils are taught computing skills. This has speeded up pupils' progress. For example in one lesson observed using the suite, pupils made good gains in their ability to program the computer to draw regular shapes. Their teacher made good use of the interactive whiteboard to demonstrate and explore different and more advanced functions.
88. The school has invested wisely in the purchase of laptop computers. These are a good, flexible resource, since they are used in the suite as well as in classrooms where they are quickly and easily set up.
89. The subject has been developed well since the last inspection when insufficient equipment and lack of use in classrooms was hindering pupils' progress. Standards of attainment have risen and teachers' knowledge and confidence is now much better. The school's assessment of pupils' progress is good, and the information is used well to plan work.

MUSIC

90. No music lessons were seen during the inspection so no judgements could be made about the levels of attainment pupils reach nor about the standard of teaching. The quality of singing in assemblies though is poor. Many younger pupils are unable to read the words in hymnbooks and many older pupils do not sing at all.
91. The school has recently introduced a different scheme of work. This is helping teachers provide the opportunities to raise standards in all areas of the subject. Older pupils benefit from weekly recorder lessons given by a visiting teacher, paid for by the school. The school has an adequate range of good quality musical instruments. At present there is too little checking on the quality of teaching and on the progress pupils are making.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

92. No lessons were seen during the inspection so no judgements can be made about the standards pupils reach in gymnastics, games and dance, however pupils achieve well in swimming. By Year 6, all pupils reach the expected standards with many becoming confident swimmers able to demonstrate a variety of advanced water skills. In outdoor/adventurous activities pupils also do well. Pupils in Year 6 attend a residential field centre where they engage in a variety of outdoor activities. They learn many skills associated with orienteering, climbing and canoeing.

93. There is enthusiastic participation in the after-school hockey and line-dancing clubs. Pupils have also learnt rugby skills when they joined with others at another local school to be taught by an experienced professional coach. Pupils take part in sport against other schools and recently won a rounders' tournament.
94. The school's recent move to the new premises has expanded its ability to provide good quality experiences for pupils. It now has playing fields and playgrounds in addition to a large hall. The co-ordinator is well prepared to make the most of these new opportunities. She has attended several courses to extend her knowledge with more planned. The school's planning shows that all strands of the subject are taught appropriately and that assessments are well made. Pupils' attainments are noted and matched against the different levels in the National Curriculum, and work is planned effectively using this information.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

95. Pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 attain standards in religious education (RE) that are broadly in line with those expected in the locally agreed syllabus. Although no RE lessons were seen during the inspection, judgements have been made by looking at pupils' work and talking to the co-ordinator.
96. By the time they are in Year 2 pupils have learnt about the importance of customs surrounding Christmas and other festivals. They know stories about the life of Christ and are beginning to understand about special places for worship. During Years 3-6 pupils learn about the Hindu faith and stories from the old and new testament. By the time they are in Year 6, pupils have a good understanding about Hindu gods, and many Hindu stories. They discuss stories like Adam and Eve. All pupils visit the local church and discuss the different parts and their significance. They then make comparisons with the Hindu faith and begin to understand about the significance of religious places of worship. Overall, pupils' achievement is satisfactory.
97. It is not possible to judge the quality of teaching in RE, but work in books show good marking. The pupils' work is valued and encouraging comments are made. There are also suggestions as to how pupils can improve their work. These suggestions are usually followed up by the pupils and work is neat and tidy.
98. The leadership and management of RE are satisfactory. The co-ordinator has worked hard to provide support to her colleagues and to ensure that resources are good. Assemblies are used well to support the learning in RE and the local vicar regularly leads acts of collective worship. RE makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, pupils learn sensitively about other faiths and religions and talk maturely about these.